

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /062 W  
----- 078000 /12

R 210935Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5601  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
AMEMBASSY LOME  
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 5588

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR  
SUBJ: POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE

1. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE DEMONSTRATED PERSONAL INTEREST IN MY TRIP TO ANCIENT SALT MINING CITY OF BILMA LYING ASTRIDE NORTHEASTERN SECTION OF CARAVAN ROUTE. DURING OUR DISCUSSION DECEMBER 15 HE EVIDENCED PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF OUR REQUEST TO TAKE ATTACHE AIRCRAFT THERE. GOVERNMENT QUIETLY BUT FIRMLY MODIFIED OUR ORIGINAL REQUEST BY SUBSTITUTING POLITICALLY MORE IMPORTANT AGADEZ FOR ARLIT. DURING FORMAL RECEPTION AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, KOUNTCHE WALKED TO MY TABLE IN DIPLOMATIC SECTION TO ASK ABOUT MY WELL BEING AND ABOUT TRIP. THIS APPEARED TO BE DONE DELIBERATELY FOR EFFECT, ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT IS PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF DOING THIS FOR NO REASON OTHER THAN HIS PERSONAL INTEREST. I HAVE NO DOUBT HE WAS INTERESTED BUT I SUSPECT POLITICAL MOTIVATION FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. TWENTY MINUTES PRIOR TO PRESIDENT'S STARTLING APPEARANCE AT TABLE, CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, JOLY FETCHED ME TO MAKE SOME INTRODUCTIONS TO GOVT OFFICIALS I HAD NOT MET. SOME OF  
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THESE OFFICIALS WERE SITTING IN PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE SECTION.

B. DURING JOLY INTRODUCTIONS, EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR (WHO HAD PRESENTED HIS LETTERS FORTY-FIVE MINUTES AFTER ME) ATTEMPTED TO INTERCEPT JOLY BUT WAS GENTLY BRUSHED ASIDE. IT NOT UNREASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT EGYPTIAN WANTED EQUAL

TREATMENT.

C. EXPEDITIOUS CLEARANCE OF OUR TRIP TO NORTH (DEC. 15 TO 17) WAS UNPRECEDENTED.

D. PRESIDENT IN SPEECH TO NATION ON DEC. 17, SINGLED OUT DONORS WHO HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO NIGER. UNITED STATES WAS MENTIONED IN SECOND PLACE AFTER FRANCE. SOVIET UNION DID NOT MAKE LIST.

E. GOVERNMENT RESPONDED WITH ALACRITY TO OUR DEMARCHE REGARDING GUAM ISSUE IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (SEE NIAMEY 5331).

F. ALL OF THIS MAY SIGNIFY NOTHING MORE THAN WEAVING OF WHOLE CLOTH OUT OF GOSSAMER THREADS BUT BRILLIANT ANALYSIS OF GEO-POLITICS OF NIGER--INSIDE AFRICA--INSIDE WORLD THAT KOUNTCHE PROVIDED ME ON 15TH DECEMBER COMPELS ME BELIEVE HIS ACTIONS ARE SPUN FROM CONSCIOUS THOUGHT.DAVISON

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## Message Attributes

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